

Sinclair Broadcast Group has too often imposed censorship on the news personnel and the stations affiliated with Sinclair as if the news to be broadcast on the airwaves belonging to the public must not be broadcast unless it meets Sinclair's approval.

(a) After September 11, Sinclair ordered news personnel at its Baltimore station to read patriotic statements supporting President Bush. News and editorial comment are completely different and the distinction should not be muddled.

(b) The Sinclair Broadcast Group prohibited its affiliates from airing the April 30, 2003 Nightline program in which Ted Koppel recited the names of 721 U.S. servicemen and women killed in the Iraq War--a disservice to its audiences and an act of gross disrespect to the troops who serve.

(c) Now, a short time before the presidential election November 2, 2004, Sinclair has decided to force its stations to air a 90-minute program including an anti-Kerry documentary.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to be based on responsible use. Thank you.